

SECTION ONE



INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

LESSON SIX MAKING COMMENTS COUNT

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 - e. COMMENT CARDS – ACTIVITY (TO BE USED FOR BASIC TRAINING AND COMMENT CONNECTION ACTIVITY)

"A compliment is a gift wrapped in words!"



LESSON SIX

MAKING COMMENTS COUNT

GOAL: To demonstrate the ability to independently make 3 comments on one topic with a peer or the Conversation Coach while walking along the Conversation Path in four out of five Long Conversations.

MATERIALS:

- COMMENT CARD (SENTENCES) sheet.

INTRODUCTION

Signs and gestures to consider in this lesson: comment, question.

The children should be seated around the table for this lesson.

We have learned a lot about asking questions over the last couple of weeks. In this lesson, we are going to learn about something just as important as asking a question. In fact, it often goes along with a question. It is called a comment! Does anyone know what I mean when I say the word “comment?” (Children respond.)

All great ideas! Comments might be a listening noise that you make when you go “hmm!” or “OOh.” Sometimes they might be words like “Wow!” or “Really?,” and sometimes they might be phrases like “No way!” or “That’s too bad.” We make comments all the time when we are talking to other people, and we don’t even realize it! They just kind of happen!

Does anyone know why we make comments when we have a conversation? (Children respond.)

I think that we make comments to show people that we are listening to them, and this makes them feel good! I know that I feel good when people make comments to me. It tells me that they care about what I have to say.

BASIC TRAINING

I am going to show you some examples of how important comments are and how they can effect how we feel. (Cut out the sentence strips from the Comment Card Sentences sheet, and put them on the table face down. Select a student who is a good reader. Have the child read you the sentences one at a time. In response to the sentences, make comments. Some of them should match the message, and some should be inappropriate. After each comment, discuss why your choice was suitable or not and how it made the child feel. Then brainstorm how the inappropriate comments could have been replaced with a more appropriate option.) Some examples could include the following:

Child’s sentence: *“My grandma is so sick,”*
Conversation Coach’s comment: *“Haha, that’s CRAZY!”*

Child’s sentence: *“Boy, that test was hard!”*
Conversation Coach’s comment: *“Ya, you’re not kidding!”*

Child’s sentence: *“I read the BEST book today!”*
Conversation Coach’s comment: *“Cool! What was it about?”*

Child's sentence: **"Hey, I just won a free trip to DISNEYLAND!"**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"Whatever."**

Child's sentence: **"I don't feel well,"**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"Oh, that's too bad."**

Child's sentence: **"I am so MAD at my sister."**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"That's hilarious!"**

Child's sentence: **"We lost our puppy today."**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"Oh, I am so sorry to hear that!"**

Child's sentence: **"These cookies are SO good, aren't they?"**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"Ooh, I think they're gross!"**

Child's sentence: **"I'm really tired today."**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"That's great! Let's go play some ball!"**

Child's sentence: **"I won the public speaking contest at school!"**
Conversation Coach's comment: **"Congratulations!"**

PRACTICE RUN AND ROLE-PLAYS

You can see that making the wrong comments can really affect how other people feel. Sometimes making no comments can be just as bad. I am going to show you a role-play so that you can see what I mean. Who would like to volunteer to help me? (Select one of the children to go in the hallway with you. Tell the child that you are going to have a conversation with him. It is going to be a really exciting one, because you are going to tell him that you just got a new bike. His job is to listen to you but show no emotions. As this may be a difficult thing for the child to do, you will likely want to practice the role play a couple of times with him before he does it in front of the group. Once you and the child have worked out your roles, go back into the classroom and do the role-play.)

YELLOW STONE	Hi Ross! (Ross responds.)
GREEN STONE	How's it going? (Ross responds.)
BLUE STONE	Hey, guess what, Ross! (Ross responds indifferently.) I got a brand new bike! (Ross looks emotionless and does not speak.) Ross! My mom and dad got me a brand new bike! (Ross remains unmoved and does not speak.) It's a brand new 21-speed mountain bike with chrome wheels! It even has a cool rack to hold my backpack! (Ross remains unmoved and does not speak.)
RED STONE	Hmm, well, I think I'm going to go now. (Ross responds.)
YELLOW STONE	Bye! (Ross responds.)

PRACTICE RUN AND ROLE-PLAYS *(Continued)*

Wow! What was wrong with that conversation? (Children respond. Discuss how this type of indifference can affect how you might feel about sharing good news or bad news with Ross next time. Discuss how his indifference could affect how you view him as a friend. You can also role-play the conversation again, with the same child and have him demonstrate enthusiasm for your new bike. You can then discuss how this new situation would affect how you would feel about him as a friend.)

COMMENT CONNECTION (ACTIVITY):

So, what we can see from this role-play is that making no comments can be just as frustrating to our conversation partner as making the wrong comments. Now that we have seen a few examples of how to do it the wrong way, we are now going to practice making comments in the right way. We are going to play a game called “Comment Connection.” You are going to be in two teams. I am going to read some sentences to your team, and you will have a chance to come up with a good comment. If your comment connects with my sentence, or in other words they match, then you will score a point for your team. The first team to get the most comment connections will win the game. (In the middle of the table, you will place a stack of cards with statements written on them. Many of the statements will be written to evoke emotion, however, some of them will be neutral in their effect. You will read the cards one at a time to each team. Their job is to select an appropriate comment that connects with your statement. The teams can win a point by providing an appropriate comment. Group discussion is allowed and encouraged.)

HELPFUL HINTS . . .

1. As you are doing this lesson, many different kinds of comments will naturally be springing up. Have your comment thought bubbles ready. Fill them in, and tack them onto the wall display as they are spoken. Show enthusiasm for their discovery, and you may see that the children are going to start coming up with some more comments of their own!
2. As you are doing the lesson, take note of how the children are making their comments. For example, does their tone of voice match the words that they are saying. Do their facial expressions and body gestures match the words that they are saying? If not, consider pulling some of the activities from Lesson Eight into Lesson Six so that you can start to target these skills.

WRAP UP AND HOMEWORK CHALLENGE

Well, that was a lot of fun today! Look at how many comments we have added to our Conversation Path wall display! Here is my challenge for this week. I would like you to listen to some conversations this week. Listen for the comments! If you find any new ones, could you please bring them to class next time? The more comments we add to our path, the more we will all have to pick from!

KEEP IT FUN

1. **Wall Display:** Write a variety of comments on the comment bubbles, and add them to the wall display. Place them on the left side of the WH questions under the blue Conversation Stone.
2. **Chant:** Do the COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS chant with the students. This chant reminds the children that comments and questions are conversation movers! They move the conversation in a forward direction.
3. **Worksheet:** Do the MAKING COMMENT CONNECTIONS worksheet with the children in class or it can be sent home as an assignment.

Do the SHANTILLY MANILLI'S CONVERSATION MOVERS which focuses on make Comment Connections and Comment + Question Connections
4. **Conversation Recipes and Scripts:** Look for images of people having Long Conversations, and have the children practice their conversation recipes and scripts. Consider looking for pictures that show a person who appears to be making a comment to someone else.
5. **Walk the Conversation Path:** Continue having the children practice their Long Conversations on the Conversation Path. Encourage the children to add comments to their conversations.
6. **Comment Categories:** Write out three labels (i.e. "Not good," "So so," and "Good!"). Then take your comment cards, and read them out to the child. Have the child put them into the category that best describes when the comment might be used. For example, if the comment "Awesome!" was made, the child would put it under the "Good Pile!", because this would be a comment we would use if something really nice happened. If the comment "I'm sorry to hear that!" was made, the child would put it into the "Not good!" pile, because this would be a comment we would use if something unpleasant happened. There are times when the comments can fit into two categories. For example, if the comment "No way!" was made, it could fit into a couple of categories. The Conversation Coach could then discuss how the delivery of the message could affect its intent.
7. **Role-Plays:**
 - a. **Pre-select the Demonstration Role-Play**
Choose role-plays that are appropriate to the age of the children and their level of "need to know."
 - b. **Implement the Demonstration Role-Play**
 - The role-play should be done by the adults and should demonstrate what "not to do" in a conversation.
 - Try to practice the role-play before doing it in front of the children so that it can be executed smoothly.
 - When you introduce it to the children say, "Watch this conversation, and tell me what is wrong with it when we're done."
 - c. **Discuss the Demonstration Role-Play**
Once the role-play is finished, ask follow-up questions, and then redo the role-play to see how it could look:
 - *What did Person A do wrong in that conversation?*
 - *What would Person B think about Person A?*
 - *How would you feel if that happened to you?*
 - *What could Person A have done differently?*
 - *How would that have made Person B feel?*

d. **Raise of Wisdom**

Consider a “Raise of Wisdom” motto that might match what the children have learned throughout the lesson activities and/or through the individual role-plays. For example, “Comments show that we are listening and that we care.”

Role-Play (Examples)

The following is a list of some role-plays that could be considered for the Making Comments Count Lesson. These are only examples. They can be modified as best seen fit for the child’s age and/or the learning environment:

- a) For all children: CHILD is having a conversation with another student. CHILD is talking about his upcoming birthday party. The other child is listening but making no comments. CHILD looks disappointed.
- b) For all children: CHILD is telling a friend about a good book he just read. The other child’s comments are more enthusiastic than what is needed in the conversation (i.e. WOW!!!! NO WAY!!!! That’s SO COOL!!!!). CHILD looks confused.
- c) For all children: TEACHER is telling a student that he will be getting an award at the school assembly. TEACHER is excited for the child. The child’s comments are indifferent and do not match the teachers level of enthusiasm. TEACHER looks confused.
- d) For all children: PARENT is politely giving the child a list of Saturday chores. The child is making negative comments (i.e. No way! Really! Come on!). PARENT looks annoyed.
- e) For older children: STUDENT is playing video games with a friend. The other child is doing better than STUDENT and is bragging about it. (i.e. I’m awesome! Wow, I can’t believe it! I got that one too! I’m so goood!) STUDENT looks annoyed.

DISCUSSION:

1. What key word might sum up Lesson Six? The word would be CARE.

When you think about it, making comments is really a selfless act. There isn’t a lot in it for the person who is making them. So why do we make comments? In part, we do it to show that we CARE about our conversation partners and are interested in what they are saying. In this lesson, we want the children to grasp the value of making comments in conversations. They are powerful and effective tools that can be used to develop positive relationships with others.

In Lesson Six, we want to increase the variety of comments that a child can use as well as show them how and when they would best be applied.

Lastly, in Lesson Six, we want to help the children understand that making good Comment Connections is more than just the words we say. Our delivery of the comment is also important. Our tone of voice and nonverbal communication should match the words that we speak. Words often hold emotion. Thus, the comments we make should match the emotion of the message being delivered by the speaker.

2. What key areas might be focused on in Lesson Six? The Conversation Coach may choose to focus on many areas including the following:
- a. Improving awareness for concepts surrounding the topic of comments. This will be accomplished through group discussions (i.e. What are comments? Why do we use them? Why is it important to make our comments match what is spoken to us?).

- b. Increasing the variety of comments that one can make. This includes helping the children to build a repertoire of options that they can draw from when having conversations with others. In part, the wall display will provide a record of the options that the children have learned.
- c. Improving the ability to use comments within the context of a conversation. This may initially be done while the children are practicing their conversations on the Conversation Path. After this, the children will be encouraged to make comments in more natural conversational settings. This goal may also focus on making appropriate Comment Connections (i.e. matching facial expressions, body gestures, tone of voice and words.)
- d. Developing emotional awareness of others. Lesson Eight deals directly with the topic of emotions. Lesson Six is an introduction to this topic. Some key principals that may be introduced in this lesson include the following: We all have emotions. Emotions are how we feel. Often we will show how we feel through our nonverbal communication. We can show emotions in our conversations. Our conversation partners can show emotions through their conversations. It is important to listen to our conversation partners; not just in the words that they say but also in the manner that they say it. We should (in most cases) respond in a manner that matches our conversation partners.



LESSON SIX TEACHING TOOLS

Comments

